श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, सब लोग स्टेटमेंट करते हैं ...(व्यवधान)... मेरे साथ अन्याय हुआ है। ..

श्री के॰बी॰ शणप्पा: सर, आप हमारे custodian हैं ...(व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your seats.

Review of policy of permitting big retail corporates

*223. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:††
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has lately reviewed its policy on permitting big retail corporates to expand their footprints in retail markets, so as not to hurt local groceries, including vendors of vegetables and fruits;

(b) if so, the decisions taken in the matter to protect the interests of small retailers and consumers; and

(c) the steps taken and the directions issued by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The retailers/traders register their shops with concerned authorities in various States. Presently, there is no restriction on the entry of any domestic investor into retail sector. So far as Foreign Direct Investment is concerned, as per extant policy, the Government allows 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in cash and carry through the automatic routs and 51 per cent in single brand.

. (b) and (c) Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion have on 20-3-2007 sanctioned a Study on "The Impact of organized Retailing on the Unorganized Retail Sector" to be carried out by International Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). The Study will, *inter alia*, cover effect on organized retailing on small retailers and vendors in the unorganized sector keeping in mind the likely growth in the overall market and effect on employment. The recommendations and findings of this study will enable the Government to take a view on the need to have a policy on organized with regard to its overall impact. ICRIER was to submit the final Report in July, 2007 but has sought change in time schedule to enable additional survey for the study. The Final report by NCAER is scheduled to be submitted by May, 2008.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I refer to the reply, to what the hon. Minister has given. I will just quote the operative part of it. It says. "...the Government allows 100 per cent FDI in cash and carry through the automatic route and 51 per cent in single brand." Then, in the second part he says, "The final Report by NCAER is scheduled to be submitted by May 2008." Does it mean to say that the Government has taken all these decisions about FDI, automatic route and in single brand even before getting the report? If it has already taken and the report says that the decision taken is not right, is it possible that the Government will be able to change it because those investments have already come to India? What is the importance of this kind of report being made now? That is one thing, Sir. In the

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Santosh Bagrodia.

same sequence, I would like to know whether the Government has taken cognisance of the changing business model adopted by mega retail chains in the country, thereby involving the small retailer and local shops in their business model; if so, whether the Government encourages such business models.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, firstly, I think, the hon. Member seems to have some misunderstanding. The Government has not taken any decision to allow the FDI in retail sector. The Government is also not considering any such proposal, because we want to protect the interest of the retailers. Here, the ICRIER, has been deputed to do a particular job. It is supposed to study "The Impact of organised Retailing on the Unorganised Retail Sector." This organised retail is the domestic retail. Now, a number of big companies are coming up and there is a general discussion. That is why, we have entrusted this task to ICRIER so that we can understand as to what is the impact of the domestic organised sector on the retailing. So, the question of FDI does not arise.

Secondly, the Government cannot stop this. The Government of India has no authority. The State Government concerned is competent under the Shops and Establishments Act to take decision whether to allow opening a shop. So, all the powers are vested with the State Government.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, may be, I was confused. I am happy that the hon. Minister has clarified it. But, what is the meaning of 51 per cent in a single brand? This is creating more confusion. Probably, I have not been able to understand. I would be grateful if the hon. Minister explains it further. It is because, 51 per cent or 99 per cent or 100 per cent is the same thing. If the Government is going to take a decision on this, it should be either for unlimited percentage or otherwise. This is wrong to misguide the nation that we are allowing only 51 per cent. That is neither here nor there. Sir, there is so much opposition in the minds of the individuals.

The Economic Survey of this year says that the Government intends to open up the retail sector for FDI. This is what the Economic Survey says. it is there. If it is not there, it is well and good. So, how does the Government intend to attract FDI in view of the domestic opposition? If that happens, does the Government have any plan to change the Acts like AMPC, Shops and Establishments, accordingly?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, I have made the position absolutely clear that there is no proposal and the Government is not thinking to allow FDI in retail sector. We want to protect the interest of the retailers in this country.

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA: Sir, this is a very major question. I must say that the reply of the hon. Minister is rather unsatisfactory. He admits that there is FDI in cash and 51 per cent otherwise in single brand. The question that Mr. Bagrodia asked is whether the Government is considering any policy to protect the retail traders as a result of this kind of change in policy. It is a fact, I must say, that the Economic Survey has said exactly what Mr. Bagrodia is saying. If the hon. Minister says that this is not the policy of the Government, it is very good. But, nobody knows that the Economic Survey is saying something which is not the Government's policy. But the question is: what is the Government doing? What policy are they, actually, adopting to protect the small retailers? Sir, the member says that the ICRIER is preparing a study. I have seen the studies that have been done by it before. This is not an answer. The answer is that the Government must take a view of the whole policy itself. By the way, there is a mistake in the reply. The last sentence is about NCAER. The NCAER is not involved in this.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, I have made the position absolutely clear. The study is Impact of the Organised Retailing on the Unorganized Retail Sector. The organised retail here means domestic organised retail, might be corporate, but not the FDI.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I asked about the Economic Survey. He has not replied to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If there is a mistake in the reply, you raise that subject separately.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sengupta, please sit down. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA: Sir, the question is very clear. The question has not been answered. The question is regarding the decisions taken in the matter to protect the interests of small retailers and consumers. It is not a question of organised or unorganised sector.

Has the Government taken any view how to protect the small retailers and consumers? This is the question...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, as I said, we are expecting this Report to come up to the end of May, 2008. After getting the Report, the Government will consider it. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: माननीय सभापति जी, अभी माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि प्रान्तों की सरकारों में 'Shop and Establishment Act' है और खुदरा व्यापार प्रान्तीय सरकारों का विषय है, परन्तु दिखाई यह दे रहा है कि खुदरा व्यापार के क्षेत्र में बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियां और देश के बड़े-बड़े पूंजीपति आ रहे हैं, बड़े-बड़े मॉल स्थापित हो रहे हैं। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या केन्द्र सरकार इस संबंध में प्रान्तीय सरकारों को कोई निर्देश देगी, कोई मीटिंग बुलाकर इस बारे में कोई नीतिगत फैसला करेगी?

दूसरे, अगर हम कृषि के क्षेत्र में बड़े किसानों के लिए सीलिंग एक्ट ला सकते हैं, तो खुदरा व्यापार के क्षेत्र में ऐसा कानून क्यों नहीं बनाया जा सकता, जिससे बड़े-बड़े व्यापारी, बड़े-बड़े पूंजीपति खुदरा व्यापार में न घुसें और छोटे खुदरा व्यापारियों के हितों की रक्षा हो सके, क्योंकि यह मामला बेरोजगारों के साथ जुड़ जाएगा और लाखों-करोड़ों की संख्या में लोग बेरोजगार हो जाएंगे। इसलिए मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या सरकार इस संबंध में कोई विचार कर रही है?

श्री शरद पवार: मैंने इसका जवाब दिया है कि एक तो, पहली बात यह है कि बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों को यहां तो अलाऊ किया नहीं गया। The domestic industrial houses are taking initiative and interest in this sector. The whole country knows it. There are about 10 to 12 organisations which are working in ths particular area. जो यहां समस्या उठाई गई कि इसका इम्पैक्ट रिटेल सैक्टर पर क्या होता है अगर होता है तो वह अच्छा नहीं होता और इस बारे में कोई कदम उठाने की आवश्यकता है। मगर इस बारे में कोई अंतिम निर्णय लेने से पहले, क्या गलत इम्पैक्ट होता है, इसकी स्टडी होनी आवश्यक है और वह स्टडी करने की जिम्मेदारी 'ICRIER' संगठन को दी गई है और यह संगठन अपनी रिपोर्ट मई, 2008 तक देने वाला है। उस रिपोर्ट के आने के बाद इसका बुरा कोई इम्पैक्ट होता है, यदि इस तरह की कोई बात सामने आई तो इसमें अलग तरह से सोचने का काम सरकार जरूर करेगी।

DR. K. KESHAVA RAO: Sir, I would like to know whether the Minister is aware that the Standing committee on Commerce has appointed a Sub-Committee which is going round the country to study the impact of these corporate sectors as also the FDI impact on the poor retailers. What is the impact on the poor retailers in India?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, we are waiting for the Report of the Standing Committee to come. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 224. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sir, I have only one query. ..(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. ..(*Interruptions*).. Please resume you seat. ...(*Interruptions*)... This question is over. ...(*Interruptions*)... Question No. 224, the hon. Member is absent. Question No. 225.

*224. [The Questioner (Shri Tarini Kanta Roy) was absent. For answer *vide* Page 222.]

Rail accidents in the country

*225. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of rail accidents reported across the country during the last year;

(b) the total loss of life and property due to these accidents;

(c) the compensation paid to the affected families of the deceased in these accidents;

(d) whether it is a fact that many cases of compensation are still pending in the Ministry and if so, how they are likely to be disposed of;

(e) what are the reasons for these tragedies reported;

(f) how many persons in the Ministry found negligent in duties have been brought to book; and

(g) what steps are being taken to prevent such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) There were 195 consequential train accidents on Indian Railways during 2006-07 in which 208 persons lost their lives and 402 sustained injuries. Loss of railway property on account of these accidents has been estimated to be Rs. 31.93 crore. Compensation is paid only after a decree is awarded on a claim filed in this regard in the Railway Claims Tribunal. So far Rs. 36 lakhs have been paid as compensation for claims filed in respect of these accidents.

(d) No, Sir. Accident compensation claims are adjudicated by Railway Claims Tribunal which is a quasi judicial body. However, Railways have taken steps to speed up settlement of compensation claims.

(e) and (f) Out of 195 consequential train accidents during 2006-07, 85 were attributed to failure of railway staff, 84 due to failure of persons other that railway staff, 9 due to equipment failure, 8 due to sabotage, 7 were incdental, 1 due to combination of factors and I could not be established. During 2006-07, disciplinary action was taken against 200 railway employees held responsible for accidents.

(g) All possible steps are undertaken on a continuing basis to prevent accidents. These measures include timely replacement of over-aged assets, adoption of suitable technologies for up-gradation and maintenance of track, rolling stock, signaling and interlocking systems, safety drives and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices. As a result, there has been a declining trend in the number of accidents from 473 in 2000-01 to 234 in 2005-06 and further to 195 in 2006-07.

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Mr. Chairman, the reply by the Minister shows that a large number of rail accidents occur due to human errors. In fact, 169 out of 195 accidents occurred due to